

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 04599 311443Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 4599

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E.O. GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: THIRD COUNTRY ISSUES: PANAMA'S VIEWS

REF: STATE 172095

SUMMARY: CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS OVERRIDE ANY AND ALL
THIRD COUNTRY ISSUES HERE. GOP FAVORED LIFTING OF CUBA
SANCTIONS, WOULD APPROVE RECIPROCAL MOVES TO BETTER US-CUBA
RELATIONS, AND WOULD WELCOME END TO EXCLUSION VENEZUELA AND
ECUADOR FROM BENEFITS TRA. BUT NONE OF ABOVE US ACTIONS
WILL HAVE MAJOR BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS.
ONLY A NEW CANAL TREATY CAN PRODUCE THAT. END SUMMARY

1. IMPACT ON US-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS OF SPECIFIC ISSUES
MENTIONED DEPTTEL MUST BE VIEWED IN LIGHT OF GOP'S OVERRIDING
CONCERN WITH THE BILATERAL ISSUE: CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS.
PANAMA, HAVING SUCCESSFULLY MUSTERED NEAR-UNANIMOUS SUPPORT
OF LATIN AMERICA BEHIND ITS EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THIS
ISSUE WITH U.S., IN TURN SUPPORTS OTHER LATIN AMERICAN
NATIONS IN THEIR DISPUTES WITH OR COMPLAINTS AGAINST
U.S. PANAMA HAS ARGUED IN FAVOR OF LIFTING OAS SANCTIONS
AGAINST CUBA, AND STRONGLY DENOUNCED EXCLUSION OF
VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR FROM BENEFITS OF TRA. NOT ONLY A
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 04599 311443Z

QUID PRO QUO IS INVOLVED, OF COURSE. THE GOP HOLDS

STRONG CONVICTIONS ON EACH ISSUE, AND REGARDS THE
REDUCTION OF LATIN AMERICAN DEPENDENCY ON THE U.S.,
WHETHER COUCHED IN ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL TERMS, AS ONE OF
ITS MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY GOALS.

2. PANAMA SEEKS A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. VIS-A-VIS
THE CANAL ISSUE, ONE THAT DEMONSTRATES U.S. WILLINGNESS
TO ENTER INTO A MATURE AND EQUAL PARTNERSHIP WITH IT.
U.S. ACTIONS ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION THAT EMPHASIZE OUR
SERIOUS INTENT TO CARRY THROUGH ON CREATING A NEW RELATION-
SHIP WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THAT EVIDENCE OUR SENSITIVITY
TO LATIN PROBLEMS WILL REDOUND TO OUR CREDIT WITH THE GOP.
THEY WILL NOT, HOWEVER, LESSEN PANAMANIAN PRESSURE ON US
TO CONCLUDE A NEW TREATY.

3. U.S. DECISION NOT TO OPPOSE OAS DISMANTLING OF CUBA
SANCTIONS AT SAN JOSE MEETING WILL BENEFIT U.S.-
PANAMANIAN RELATIONS. PANAMA HAS LONG FAVORED THIS ACTION,
AND GOP LIKELY TO READ U.S. ACTION IN SAN JOSE AS EVIDENCE
OF INCREASED U.S. SENSITIVITY TO HEMISPHERE PROBLEMS AND
AS RESPONSE T LA MAJORITY DETERMINATION TO END FORMAL
ISOLATION OF CUBA WILLY-NILLY. ONE PROBLEM THAT
HAS ARISEN CONCERNS APPLICABILITY OF SECTION 620 (A)
(1) OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT (TRADING WITH CUBA). IN
LIGHT OF OAS LIFTING OF SANCTIONS MISSION SUGGESTS DEPT
MAY WISH TO CONSIDER INTRODUCING IN CONGRESS BLANKET
WAIVER TO THIS SECTION FOR ALL COUNTRIES. RECIPROCAL
MOVES TO BETTER OUR RELATIONS WITH CUBA ALONG LINES
OF REFTEL ITEM 2 WILL BE APPROVED BY GOP BUT WILL NOT
HAVE MATERIAL EFFECT ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

4. GOP CONDEMNED FORCEFULLY OPEC EXCLUSION FROM GSP
IN TRA. IT WOULD WELCOME U.S. CHANGE ON THIS ISSUE.

5. WERE THE U.S. TO COMMENCE ABOVE-MENTIONED RECIPROCAL
MOVES WITH CUBA, AND END OPEC EXCLUSION FROM TRA BENEFITS,
IT WOULD INDICATE TO GOP DESIRE ON PART OF U.S. TO REMOVE
IMPORTANT AREAS OF CONTENTION FROM U.S.-LATIN AMERICA
AGENDA OF RELATIONS, BUT NEITHER ACTION BEARS DIRECTLY
ON WHAT PANAMA, AND INDEED LATIN AMERICA AS A WHOLE
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PAGE 03 PANAMA 04599 311443Z

REGARDS AS THE PRIORITY ISSUE HERE--ABROGATION OF
THE 1903 CANAL TREATY AND AGREEMENT ON NEW CANAL TREATY
PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE
CANAL ZONE.
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